

## **House Panel Holds Hearing to Examine National Transportation Safety Board Report on June 22, 2009 Red Line Metrorail Accident**

*Oversight Subcommittee Continues to Review Local and Federal Efforts to Improve Safety Culture of Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority*

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – On Thursday, September 23, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. in room 2203 of the Rayburn House Office Building, the Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia will hold an oversight hearing entitled, “Moving Forward After the NTSB Report: Making Metro a Safety Leader.”

For the most part, the hearing will examine the results and findings of the National Transportation Safety Board’s (NTSB) Railroad Accident Report on the June 22, 2009 Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Red Line collision. Additionally, the hearing will discuss what steps WMATA has taken towards addressing the NTSB’s safety recommendations as well as enhancing the transit systems overall safety culture. Thursday’s hearing will mark the third Metro-focused hearing held by the Subcommittee during the 111<sup>th</sup>

Congress.

The June 22, 2009 accident involved the collision of two Red Line Metrorail trains, between the Fort Totten and Takoma Park Metro stations, that resulted in nine fatalities and nearly 80 individuals injured. Following an accident investigation that lasted over one year, the NTSB

issued its final Rail Accident Report on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010, which notably pointed out a variety of safety findings and recommendations designed to address the system and equipment safety deficiencies that facilitated the June 22, 2009 collision as well as to improve WMATA's safety practices, policies, and environment.

Included among NTSB's key recommendations are the periodic inspection and maintenance of all audio frequency track circuit modules within the Metrorail system, a review of internal information-sharing procedures regarding safety updates, and the permanent removal of aging railcars.

"The Rail Accident report issued by the National Transportation Safety Board in the aftermath of the June 22, 2009 Red Line collision raises a number of serious questions regarding continued deficiencies in WMATA's equipment, infrastructure, protocols and overall safety culture," said Chairman Stephen F. Lynch. "Therefore, Thursday's hearing will give the Subcommittee an opportunity to examine the progress that WMATA is making to address the NTSB's various findings and to ensure that the highest standard of safety exists for MetroRail, MetroBus, and MetroAccess riders and employees."

Notably, WMATA is the nation's second largest rail transit system, with over 106 miles of track and 86 stations. Collectively, WMATA's services are responsible for transporting 42 percent of workers in the core Washington metropolitan area to and from work each day, and, on its busiest days, provides over 850,000 rider trips. Additionally, during its approximately 30-year history, WMATA has routinely relied on a combination of federal, state, and local funding streams, as well as user fares and additional revenue sources, in order to support operational and infrastructural expenses.

In September of 2008, WMATA identified over \$11 billion in necessary capital improvement spending to maintain and finance enhancements to its aging infrastructure.

Witnesses' testimonies, the Chairman's opening statement, and a 2:00 p.m. live broadcast of

the hearing can be found on the Subcommittee's website, [www.federalworkforce.oversight.house.gov](http://www.federalworkforce.oversight.house.gov)

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*The Subcommittee on [Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia](#) 's jurisdiction includes federal employee issues, non-appropriation municipal affairs of the District of Columbia, and the Postal Service, including post office namings, holidays, and commemoratives.*